

Massachusetts Department of Public Health Success Stories



ENERGIZE EVERETT



Everett Launches Healthy Market Program to promote more Fruits and Vegetables

SUMMARY

People who rely on local corner stores for groceries are often faced with rows of unhealthy snacks and foods high in sodium, sugar and fat. Everett launched a **Healthy Markets** pilot program to increase access to healthy foods by working with local market owners. Three Everett stores were selected to participate, and one is now promoting a larger selection of fresh fruits, vegetables, and other healthy options for its customers.

CHALLENGE

With higher obesity rates than the state average, the city of Everett is working to provide residents with healthier day-to-day choices. One way to reduce overweight and obesity is through eating more fruits and vegetables. But if these foods are hard to find or afford, it can be next to impossible to get the daily recommendation. Visit your typical corner store or bodega, and you won't find many fruits, vegetables or other healthy choices. For store owners, buying small amounts of fresh produce for resale can be a challenge, and if those foods don't sell, they spoil and go to waste. However, as more customers look for healthier options, more store owners are interested in finding ways to successfully purchase and sell healthier foods. **Energize Everett** capitalized on that interest by launching its Healthy Market Program.

SOLUTION

In Fall 2012, Valerie Spain, the Coordinator for Energize Everett, began targeting local stores that met several of the Healthy Market requirements. As opposed to opening up the program to all stores, Everett decided to launch a pilot program in one store. In the spring, Valerie and Bob Mara, Director of **Everett Community Health Partnership**, identified their first pilot store, Super Mercado Latino, and recruited owner Jorge Aguirre to the Healthy Market Program. Energize Everett members visit the store regularly to offer technical assistance and observe progress. McKinnons and the Latino Meat Market were also identified as potential participants and Energize Everett made visits to them and solidified plans to bring them on board by the end of June 2013.

“The most satisfying aspect of the work is community outreach and education, nurturing coalitions and community partnerships, and simply learning what’s important to the health and well-being of this community.”

VALERIE SPAIN
ENERGIZE EVERETT

For more information, visit www.mass.gov/massinmotion

PARTNERS

*Super Mercado, McKinnons,
Latino Meat Market*

RESULTS

All three store owners are enthusiastic about the Healthy Market Program and are motivated to make it a success. As a result of his dedication, Jorge built his own produce bins to store and display fresh fruits and vegetables in the front of the store. Additionally, he created a lower-fat version of papusas (a bread stuffed with meat or veggies), and sells them as a healthier take-out option for his Latino customers. Super Mercado also accepts **SNAP** benefits (formerly known as food stamps) and reapplied to accept **WIC** vouchers. Jorge, also a produce distributor, is interested in helping other store owners purchase small amounts of produce. The Latino Meat Market relocated from Somerville, and because they participated in healthy initiatives there, are eager to become an official Healthy Market in Everett.

CONTACT

Valerie Spain

Director of Energize Everett
valerie.spain@ci.everett.ma.us

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Plans to evaluate the store progress and success are underway. Once the stores have been evaluated, Energize Everett will provide a Healthy Market Options decal to be displayed in store windows. Energize Everett has set a goal to recruit five more stores for the Healthy Markets Program by the end of 2013.



For more information, visit www.mass.gov/massinmotion